**Laquey Mini-Institute: 2014 Dr. Cathie English**

**PQP**

(**P**raise, **Q**uestion, **P**olish)

One of the easiest ways to respond to student writing is the **PQP method**. Teachers can quickly respond to students by giving one statement of praise, asking a question and giving a suggestion for “polishing” the writing. Students in small groups or pairs can easily write each of these on a peer’s paper. Here is an essay I wrote with examples for an author’s note and PQP:

Flatwater Fears

I must have been about ten years old when my mom, my Aunt Betty and my cousins, Ronnie, Brenda and Linda along with the youngest of my eleven siblings, John, Lisa, Julie, Denise, Charlie and Vicki Lynn decided we needed to cool off in the horrid humidity of a Nebraska July afternoon. Mom and Aunt Betty packed up a cooler of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, potato chips and cherry Kool-aid and we headed to the Platte River, about a mile south of Silver Creek, Nebraska. This was in the day when there were no such things as car seats. We simply jumped into two Chevys and were off on the only paved road out of town. We crossed the newly built bridge to the south side of the river where the channel was a bit deeper. Surprisingly enough, there was a good deal of water in the river for mid-July before farmers had irrigated the river drive.

I love to swim. From the moment my parents allowed me in the water, I was a fish. On that muggy, unbearable day, I ran, with speed across the flesh burning sand (as we never wore shoes in the summer!) and splashed into the Platte River (its name means, “Flat Water) and swam out into the moving channel so I could just float along for a few feet as I wasn’t brave enough to go too far. Being so close to the bridge there was a constant flow of traffic on US Highway 39, so it was often noisy so one wouldn’t want to get to far away so that they couldn’t hear the instructions of parents. On this particular day, a very loud truck was going over the bridge and I was happily swimming along, in oblivion, wondering why my mother, aunt, cousins and siblings were suddenly open-mouthed (screaming, I realized once the truck passed by) and flailing their arms at me or pointing downstream.

Suddenly, within a yardstick of my head, I turned and saw what all the commotion was about: a water moccasin was headed right toward me, the snake’s head was just above the water, like a little kid who is dog paddling furiously. The snake’s mission, I suppose, to stay the course riding the current. I could have frozen with fear, but I didn’t. I swam out of the current and plopped onto a sandbar, breathing like I had just run the 100-meter dash.

**Example of an Author’s Note:**

1. This is a first draft
2. I like it because it brought back a very fun but scary memory of my childhood. I want to write more about it. I can’t seem to recall much after that scene but the actual events of it are still clear to me today. I wonder if I got out of the water and didn’t go back in? I wonder if our mothers made all of us stay out of the water that day?
3. I would like you to give me some ideas on how I might develop a conclusion.

**Examples of PQP:**

1. **Praise**: Cathie—I really like the second paragraph as you richly describe your entrance into the cool waters of the Platte River.
2. **Question**: Cathie—how do you know it was a water moccasin? Do you know a lot about snakes, or did you just infer that’s what it was?
3. **Polish**: Cathie—I think you could tie up your essay by writing about what you learned from this experience and how it shaped your views on snakes or respect for nature.